

Anywhere by Estrella3791

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: AHHH LUMAX, Angst, Billy not so much, But lots of fluff, Can he just not, Enjoy!, F/M, Fluff, Hope you like it anyway, I literally wanted lumax and boom, I love them so much, I'M ACTUALLY STOPPING NOW, I'm too lazy to write them all sorry, I've given up trying to be professional, LATER, Lucas needs love, Max needs love, Mileven for like one sentence, So much love needed everywhere, at all, i'm attention starved and need feedback, idk guys, imma stop rambling now, just read this and I'll be thrilled, lol jk, lots of other characters that are mentioned, more angst than fluff, please, this happened, to make up for it

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Summary:

Three times Max wants to kiss Lucas (and their outcomes), and one time Lucas kisses her (and that outcome).

This has been done a thousand times for every fandom, I'm sure, but I thought I'd try my hand at this, anyway.

Anywhere

1

The first time she wants to kiss him, she does it. She leans forward and plants a nice big smacker on him right in the middle of the Snowball, where everyone can see them. And for a while, Max doesn't regret her impulsiveness. She lays her head against Lucas's chest and allows herself to let go of all the reasons that this might backfire, all the reasons this is probably a bad idea, and just relax. She can't see it, but she's certain that Lucas is grinning like an idiot, and the thought keeps her smiling far into the night.

She regrets it later, of course. As always.
Because of Neil. As always.

He asks her, with a condescending sneer, if she kissed the 'black boy' (a phrase that makes her clench her fists and grind her teeth because Lucas is *so much more* than the color of his skin) at the 'school shebang.' Max wishes vehemently that she could hold her head high and say no, but of course she can't. Oh, she holds her head high, because she will never be ashamed of Lucas and no stupid stepfather will ever make her feel otherwise, but she can't say no because she may be many things but she never has been, nor will she ever be, a convincing liar.

And when he realized that she did it, of course, that sets off a round of screaming in which she is told that if she continues to hang out with Lucas (Neil doesn't say Lucas, of course. He says something else, and Max comes so close to slapping him in the face that she's beyond surprised that she didn't actually do it) she'll come to a bad end, that she'll regret it.

"You afraid black is contagious?" she snaps, when he's finished shouting at her, and before he can do anything she flees down the hall to the safety of her room, where she locks herself in and wishes that she could have any other family than the one she does.

Everything is made more unbearable by girls in the locker room the next day. Max has always known that girls can be cruel, but she had no idea just how cruel they could be until she did something that made them uncomfortable.

She doesn't cry – she's had too much practice swallowing her tears to let a few prejudiced brats make her shed one – but she does wish that she'd never done it, that she'd never kissed Lucas. It would make everything so much easier.

But, of course, 'easy' is something that Max never seems able to experience, and Lucas taking her hand in the hallway illustrates that fact.

She can feel all the eyes on their joined fingers, but she gives herself one blissful moment in which to imagine that she doesn't have to do what she knows she has to do.

Pulling her hand out of Lucas's hurts more than she'd have imagined. It sends actual physical pain through her midsection, and she bites her lip, knowing the apologetic squeeze she gave Lucas's fingers will never make up for the rejection.

2

The second time she wants to kiss Lucas, she's jealous.

A lot of time has passed since the Snowball, and both she and Lucas have changed. After she wouldn't hold his hand in the hallway, Max gave him a bit of a cold shoulder, and Lucas was so hurt and bewildered that it sent pangs through her. She wanted nothing - nothing - more than to cling to him and apologize and explain that it was all for his own safety. She'd heard the curses Neil muttered and the looks Billy gave her friend and she knew that if she were to give in and let him be with her, it wouldn't end well. Her stepbrother was – and is – fully capable of doing much more than a little shove against a cabinet. So even though it hurt her horribly, she closed down and gave every signal that she had no more interest in him than in Mike.

And Lucas, darn him, was more than perceptive and read her signals perfectly. He backed off, and she backed away, and now here they are, fifteen and distant. Max hates it, but she knows that Lucas getting hurt because she was too selfish to stay away from him would be so much worse than any separation.

Of course, she doesn't feel that way.

Long story short, her relationship with Lucas is now complicated and horrible.

She'd known it was coming. She'd be an idiot not to see it from a

mile away. Nothing can stay the same forever, and, being fifteen, it's only natural that the Party would start to see the opposite gender as something more than friendship material.

El and Mike have been an item since forever. Max knew this before she even met the curly-haired girl. And even though she and El have long since sorted out their differences and are, in fact, very close friends, Max sometimes finds herself resenting El for not having a horrible family. It's not fair, she knows, because the girl spent the first twelve years of her life terrified and alone, an experiment in a lab, but it doesn't mean her nasty emotions calm themselves down. Watching El holding Mike's hand under the table and Mike planting a kiss on her cheek after classes, Max is often tempted to cry, especially when she sees Lucas and can't stop dwelling on what might have been.

Mike and El aren't the only ones that have a significant other, either. Dustin has grown into his curls and his feet, and goes on dates every weekend until he finds Sophie, a cute brunette in his English class, who loves D&D almost as much as he does. Will, shy as always, is asked out by Jennifer Hayes, and even as he hesitantly accepts Max is more than aware that the two of them are probably going to be dating far into the future.

What with literally every other member of the Party paired up with someone, Max should have known it was imminent. In fact, she's pretty sure that she did know, on some deeper level that she wouldn't let rise to the surface.

Either way, it still feels like she's been kicked in the gut when she sees Lucas walking with an arm around Marie's shoulders, a broad smile on his face.

She ducks her head behind her textbook in a wild attempt to keep him from seeing her. It's stupid, because her bright hair is glaringly unmistakable, but she's in shock and suddenly heartbroken and she's not thinking straight.

If she hadn't been staring at the floor, eyes blurry with tears, she would have seen that as soon as he saw her the smile dropped off of Lucas's face, that he turned to watch her stumble away, his eyebrows crinkling together in concern.

But she doesn't look up, so she doesn't see Lucas let go of Marie, mutter something to her, and hurry down the hall after her.

She dumps her book in her locker and sniffs, because it may be her fault that this has happened but that doesn't make it hurt any less.

She turns around, thankful that the school day is over and all she has to do is make it to the arcade and she can lose herself in the flashing lights, and almost bumps into Lucas.

"Woah," she breathes, because her face is inches from his and she hasn't been this close to him in forever and it's making her heart thump like a drum.

"What's wrong, Max?" he asks, looking straight into her eyes.

She can't remember how to form coherent sentences, because *dang his eyes are pretty and dang she wishes she'd kept hold of his hand*, but she manages to say, "Nothing's wrong."

"Nothing's wrong," he scoffs. "Give me a break. I've known you for years. I know something's wrong."

"Why do you care?" she asks, slamming her locker shut and wanting so, so, so badly to throw her arms around him and never let go.

"I don't know," he says, and he sounds genuinely frustrated. "Is there any reason I *should* care?"

"Is there?" she returns, thinking of his arm around Marie and how very, very much she wishes it had been around her.

He looks at her oddly.

"Even Marie noticed that something was up with you," he says, and even though she knows he's not trying to rub anything in her face she's filled with an urge to reach up and kiss him. Max knows that he's not completely over her, even if he is trying to move on, and if she were to start something she's certain he'd finish it, and then we'll see how that tramp Marie feels.

But she doesn't give in.

"Well, I'm so grateful for *Marie's* concern," she snaps.

His face crinkles up in confusion and the longing to see if his lips are as soft as she remembers is so tempting that she has to look away. Darn you, Lucas, for being so adorable.

He gives her ample time to expound on her comment, but when she doesn't he puts his hands on her shoulders, looks her in the eyes, and asks, "What's wrong, Max?" in a voice so soft that she all but melts.

For a minute, she considers doing what she's yearning to do – inform him that everything she did she did because she loves – likes – him, that it's because she was scared for him, that she love – anyway, because she really, really wants to keep him safe. And then he'll completely understand, and say that he forgives her, and then they can make the heck out.

It's a foolproof plan, and Max wants nothing more than to carry it

out, but she thinks of Marie and knows that if she were the other girl, it would make her more than a little upset to see someone else making out with him.

So she thinks about how if life had turned out differently she could be making out with Lucas right now, and she hopes that her frustration and anger are audible in her voice.

“Nothing,” she hisses, and twists out of his grasp, her heart crying as she storms down the hall and out to Billy’s car.

3

The next time she wants to kiss him is the very next day, when he shows up at her house with a scripted apology.

“Max,” he says as soon as she opens the door, “Just listen to me, and don’t interrupt.”

A thousand responses flow to the tip of her tongue, and she bites them all back, because this is something he’s asking of her that she can actually do.

“I don’t know what’s up with you, but I know that it’s been up with you for a really long time, and I’m really worried. I know – ” His voice cracks and he looks down for a minute to regain his composure. “I know that you don’t... *like* like me, and it’s okay. It really is. But please, *please* talk to me. You can’t... you can’t internalize it, you know? You gotta talk about it, or it’ll kind of gnaw you from the inside out.”

Max almost tells him that she knows the gnawing all too well, that she’s felt it tearing at her since the horrible day she yanked her fingers from his, but she doesn’t, because her throat has closed up because he still cares, he *does*, and it’s so overwhelming that speech is something she’s no longer capable of.

Lucas looks at her and understands. He’s *always* understood. He lets her look away, nibble on her lip, try (and fail) to regain her composure.

When she does speak, her voice is wobbly and she can hear the tears in it, but she keeps talking anyway.

“It’s not...” she tries, but the tears come and she has to take a break to breathe. “Can we go somewhere else?” she asks, once she’s not sobbing.

No one else is home, but there’s no guarantee that someone’s not

going to come roaring into the driveway, and it would suck for that to happen right now.

"Sure," Lucas says, and she can tell that he's more than relieved that she's talking to him, that she's giving him the time of day, and it kills her inside and she feels the ever-present cloud of guilt push itself even more heavily upon her shoulders.

They walk down the steps together, and Lucas picks up his bike and she scoops up her board but they don't ride. They trudge down the sidewalk, out of Max's lousy neighborhood, to the playground that once upon a time was enjoyed by lots of spoiled toddlers but has since rusted so much that mothers are afraid to let their children play on it for fear of tetanus.

Lucas doesn't say anything, just follows her over to the swing set and sits on the swing beside the one she parks her butt on.

She pushes with her feet and lets herself sway back and forth before taking a deep breath and gathering her thoughts.

"I'm sorry," she says.

"You don't have to be sorry!" Lucas says quickly.

"I really do," she frowns, staring at the ground. "I didn't know..."

It's hard for her to say any of this, and Lucas gets it. He gives her time.

He's her favorite person in the entire world.

"I never meant to hurt you," she tells him. "I just... I just couldn't handle someone else doing it."

His eyes are wide when she risks a glance up at him, and he looks like he's had an epiphany, but she presses on, just in case he doesn't know what she means.

"The... Billy's not good. He hates you. And Neil... If he could, he'd kill you."

She means every word of it, and Lucas knows she does.

He always knows.

She loves him.

"If you were to hang around with me, you'd be punished for it. I know you would. If not by my scum of a family, then by people at school, or someone at the movie theater... It's not fair. It's not fair." She's crying now, because it's so unfair that people could be nasty to someone like him, kind and caring and *good*, just for dating someone like her. The thought makes her keep talking. "They'd think you were... gosh, I don't know. Out of your league, maybe. It's so stupid, because you're the one that's out of my league. You're so nice and I'm

a brat and you care and I – ”

She's sobbing, sobbing so hard that she can't talk anymore. She starts to curl in on herself, to dig her fingers into her arm to help herself get a grip, but before she can Lucas has somehow pulled her to her feet and has wrapped his arms around her and has one hand stroking her back and the other cradling her head like she's the most precious thing in the world, and he's crooning comforting nonsense that she's sure is well thought out and beautiful but which she unfortunately can't hear because she's crying too hard to hear anything over the roaring in her ears.

She grabs a fistful of his shirt in both hands and holds on as tightly as she can, crying and wailing and getting snot all over his shoulder and hating, hating, *hating* how stupid she's been and how weak she is and how many ridiculous emotions she's bottled up so that they all have to come out *now*.

Eventually, she calms down. She pulls back, and Lucas immediately releases his grasp on her.

“Sorry,” she gulps, dragging her sleeve across her wet face. “I don’t –

”
“Please don’t apologize,” he interrupts her, and she didn’t realize until now that he’s been crying, too. “Please just... I don’t know... Max?”

“Yeah?” she asks, holding her breath, partly to calm herself down and partly because she really, really hopes that he’s about to say something about *them*.

“Do you really not hate me?”

She can’t stand the insecurity written all over his face. She hesitantly reaches for his hand and curls her fingers around his, aware that she has absolutely no right and also aware that if she doesn’t touch him she’ll go insane.

“How could I hate you?” she asks. “You’re perfect.”

He scoffs.

“Yeah, right. Not really.”

“Yes, really.”

“If I were, I would have asked you to talk to me a really long time ago.”

She looks at him. He doesn’t blame himself, does he?

“You’re not...” she doesn’t know how to say this. “You didn’t do anything wrong, Lucas. Nothing. It was me. It was all me. I was the one that pulled away, even though I lo – cared about you, cared so

much, and I just got scared and, I don't know, thought that – ”

“Shh. Stop talking.”

She clamps her mouth shut. His palm is sweaty in hers.

“You... you cared about me?”

“Care,” she says firmly.

“Care?” he echoes, looking slightly dazed. “Really?”

She thinks about how he's waited for her for two whole years, which isn't that long in the grand scheme of things but which is almost an eternity for a teenager. She thinks about how he's so smitten with her, even though she's gross and weird and abrasive and troubled. She watches him watch her, and her heart swells.

“Not care,” she corrects herself, and his face falls, right before she says, “Love.”

+ 1

“Love,” she says.

Love.

The word echoes around in Lucas's head, and he can't really process what she just said right away, so while he waits for it to sink in he studies her face.

Love.

He loves her freckles. The way they're spattered across her nose, her cheeks, her chin. He loves her hair, the way it glows in the sun in the summertime. He loves her eyes, the clear blue ones fringed with pale but oh-so-long lashes.

Love.

He loves her. He's known it ever since she shoved him away in the hallway. He's known it every day he sat next to her in school and she smiled at him before seeming to shake herself out of a trance and forcing herself to look back at the board.

Love.

He knows it more than he's ever known it before in this moment. It's a perfect moment, he decides, and nothing could make it better. She's looking at him, and he can tell that she's nervous, because he hasn't responded yet and she's anxious that she's scared him away.

He's always been able to read her fairly well.

Love.

“Love?” he repeats, reaching with the hand that isn't clutching hers to cup her cheek. She leans into his touch. His heart skips.

"Love," she confirms, and before he knows what he's doing he's kissing her, like he's wanted to almost since he met her, like he's dreamed of doing every day since the Snowball. Some part of him registers that she's kissing him back, and rejoices in that fact, but the rest of his mind is busy feeling how soft her skin is under his hand, how tightly she's clasping his fingers in hers, how downright heavenly she is.

He doesn't know how long he kisses her in the middle of the decaying playground, but he knows that it's a long while. When he finally pulls back to let her breathe (she makes a small protesting noise that makes his stomach flip), he gazes at her, a stupid grin threatening to split his face and genuine joy welling in his heart.

"Love," he says, like he's stupid, and Max rolls her eyes at him.

"Yes, Stalker," she says, "we've clarified this."

Her fake irritation doesn't bother him one little bit, and he keeps grinning.

"Do you want to go somewhere?"

Her face softens, and she leans into him, hugging him tightly.

"No," she says, voice muffled by his chest.

"Okay," he says, hugging her back.

"Yes," she says, making no move to go anywhere.

He laughs at that, pulling back and feeling like such a stupid, cheesy idiot but unwilling to come down from Cloud Nine.

He's fully aware that there will be challenges. He knows that their relationship is never going to be perfect. He's all too certain that a lot of people are going to say that they're way too young to feel so strongly about each other.

That's okay. He won't mind.

"Where do you want to go?" he asks, reaching for her hand again. He rubs his thumb over the back of it, marveling at how silky it is, all but elated that she's not pulling away. He squeezes her hand, and she squeezes back.

"Anywhere," she says, "as long as it's with you."

Author's Note:

Honestly, I have no idea what this is.

I was scrolling through the Max/Lucas pages and thinking, 'Holy cow, we need more of these two' and then I read an adorable 3 + 1 fic and thought 'ooh I

could do that' and then I did and it didn't turn out well but I'm posting it anyway because I really want to see what you guys think.

Also, I feel I should mention that I'm very sleep deprived right now, which is a very common excuse but is also very true. So I know that there were probably a ton of typos but I'm posting it anyway because haha editing is overrated.

I have no filter right now, as you can probably tell.

I'm going to stop now, but if you liked it I would loooooove to know!!!

Also, if you have any ideas/prompts for Lumax stories that you'd like to see happen, let me know!!!!!!!!!!!! I just need so much Lumax, always, and if I need to write it to get my fluff fix then so be it.

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH FOR READING THIS STORY
AND THIS RIDICULOUSLY LONG NOTE!!! THANK
YOU FOR STICKING WITH ME!!! YOU ARE
AMAZING!!!

All my love,

~Star